

Earth Day. This is the 40th anniversary of Earth Day—the 40th Earth Day, in fact, the 22nd of April. I am speaking now because of my great admiration for the work of Senator Gaylord Nelson in establishing this Earth Day. I was reminded of it in two respects in the last week. One was getting to visit with his widow, Carrie Lee Nelson, who is a great personage herself, who made a great contribution to his career in public service and continues today to advocate for the same issues he advocated for, particularly as they relate to the environment.

Also earlier this year, Don Ritchie, our Senate Historian who speaks to us on Tuesdays at the Democratic lunch each week when we get together, gave what I thought was a fitting tribute to Gaylord Nelson that I wanted to share with people. I asked permission to do that. Don Ritchie agreed that was something that was acceptable. I would like to read through this and take 2 or 3 minutes.

As the Senate Historian, he recounted the facts as follows:

This past weekend, the Mini Page, a syndicated children's supplement that appears in 500 newspapers across the country, paid special tribute to a former U.S. Senator, Gaylord Nelson, for launching the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. Five years after his death, Senator Nelson remains an icon of the environmental movement.

Senator Nelson used to say he came to environmentalism by osmosis, having grown up in Clear Lake, WI. He promoted conservation as Governor of Wisconsin and, after he was elected to the Senate in 1962, he used his maiden speech to call for a comprehensive nationwide program to save the natural resources of America. He went on to compile an impressive list of legislative accomplishments, which included preserving the Appalachian Trail, banning DDT, and promoting clean air and clean water. But it was Earth Day that gave him international prominence and served as his lasting legacy.

Senator Nelson worried that the United States lacked a unity of purpose to respond to the increasing threats against the environment. The problem, in his words, was how to get a nation to wake up and pay attention to the most important challenge the human species faces on the planet. Then a number of incidents converged to help him frame a solution. In 1969, a major oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara covered miles of beaches with tar. Senator Nelson toured the area in August and was outraged by the damage the oil spill had caused, but was also impressed with the many people who rallied to clean up the mess. Flying back from California, the Senator read a magazine article about the anti-Vietnam War teach-ins that were taking place on college campuses. This inspired him to apply the same model to the environment.

In September 1969, the Senator charged his staff with figuring out how to sponsor environmental teach-ins on college campuses nationwide, to be held on the same day the following spring. Rather than organize this effort from the top down, they believed that Earth Day would work better as a grassroots movement. They raised funds to set up an office staffed by college students, with a law student, Denis Hayes, serving as the national coordinate. They identified the week of April 19 to 25 as the ideal time for college schedules and the possibility of good spring weather. Calculating that more students were on

campus on Wednesday made Wednesday, April 22, the first Earth Day. Critics of the movement pointed out that April 22 happened to be Vladimir Lenin's birthday, but Senator Nelson rebutted that it was also the birthday of the first environmentalist, Saint Francis of Assisi.

An astonishing success, the first Earth Day in 1970 was celebrated by some 20 million Americans on 2,000 college campuses, at 10,000 primary and secondary schools, and in hundreds of communities. Forty years later, its commemoration this week is expected to attract 500 million people in 175 countries.

I will at some later point talk about the environmental legacy of one of our own Senators from New Mexico, Senator Clinton Anderson, who was one of the prime sponsors and promoters of the Wilderness Act and worked with Gaylord Nelson on many of these same environmental issues and, of course, with President Kennedy, Stewart Udall, and with President Johnson.

There are many people who deserve great credit for the legacy in this country and the focus on environmental issues, and Earth Day is an appropriate time to acknowledge their contributions.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I commend the Senator from New Mexico for drawing our attention to Earth Day. It has certainly become a national, if not global, observance that calls to mind the relationship we have with this Earth that we live on and our responsibilities. We are now considering legislation involving carbon and the impact of carbon on the environment and on this planet. There are some differences of opinions on the floor of the Senate about whether this is a challenge and, if it is, how to address it.

Early next week, three of our colleagues are going to step forward with a proposal. Senator JOHN KERRY has spearheaded an effort, working with Senator BARBARA BOXER and Senator BINGAMAN, to come forward with an idea of clean energy. He will be joined by Senator JOSEPH LIEBERMAN and Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM. It is a bipartisan effort.

What they are seeking to do in this bill is certainly consistent with the goals of Earth Day and our national goals: First, to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, to encourage domestic energy sources that are renewable and sustainable so we can build on our future; second, to create jobs, which is our highest priority in this Congress with the recession we face. We understand the reality that countries such as China see a great potential for building solar panels and wind turbines and a variety of different forms of technology to promote energy efficiency and to promote the kind of clean energy approach that we should have as part of our future. Third, of course, is that we want to do something about pollution—carbon emissions, the impact they have on our lungs and on our atmosphere.

I think this is a noble agenda. It is an ambitious agenda because it engages the entire American economy. We want to be sure we do the right thing, the responsible thing, when it comes to clean energy and our future but not at the cost of economic growth and development. I happen to believe a case can be made that absent our effort, we are going to fall behind in the development of industries that have great potential.

There was a time that the two words, "Silicon Valley," sent a message not only to America but to the world that we were leading in the information technology development arena. I cannot even guess at the number of jobs, businesses, and wealth that was created by that information technology leadership in the United States. Now we need to seize that leadership again.

It is frustrating, if not infuriating, to think that 50 years ago, Bell Labs in the United States developed solar panels. Now, of the 10 largest solar panel producers in the world, not one is in the United States. That has to change. It is something of a cliché, but I say it in my speeches and it resonates with people, that I would like to go into more stores in America and find "Made in America" stamped on those products.

When it comes to this type of technology—solar panels, wind turbines—there is no reason we can't build these in the United States so that we are achieving many goals at once: a clean energy alternative, reducing our dependence on foreign oil, creating good-paying jobs in industries with a future, and in the process doing the right thing for Mother Earth. Earth Day is a time to reflect on that.

I have often spent Earth Day back in Illinois, downstate with farmers, and I can't think of any class of people in America closer to Mother Nature every single day of their lives. Most of them are not all that comfortable with these so-called environmentalists. They think they are too theoretical and not grounded in the reality that farmers face in their lives. But I have tried to draw them together in conversation, and almost inevitably they come up with some common approaches.

Whether we are talking about soil and water conservation or reduction of the use of chemicals on the land, all of these things are consistent with both environmental goals and profitable farming. So I look at our stewards of the agricultural scene in America as part of our environmental community who can play a critical role in charting a course in making policies for the future.

Mr. President, I hope that soon we will be moving to financial regulatory reform. It is a Washington term known as Wall Street reform, or basically trying to clean up the mess that was created by this last recession. This is a bill that is controversial. It has been worked on by many committees in the Senate. Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN in the Agricultural Committee took on a